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June 17, 2009

RE: Call for Projects for TIGER Discretionary Grant Program

To: Eligible Applicants

MTC is now accepting applications for the \$1.5 billion TIGER Discretionary Grant Program, following the Caltrans process and adhering to the principles endorsed by the MTC Legislation Committee. The Commission is slated to take action on the principles at its meeting on June 24th; therefore, any changes to the priorities will be communicated at that time. The deadline for submission of applications is July 6, 2009.

Background

Given the exotic name TIGER (Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery), this program has generated a very large amount of excitement for the relatively small amount of money to be distributed nationally — about \$5 per capita. California's statutory maximum is \$300 million. For the Bay Area, we might optimistically hope to receive about \$125 million. For comparison, the Bay Area received \$5.7 billion from the \$20 billion Proposition 1B bond program passed by the voters in 2006 — or nearly 30 percent of total funds.

USDOT issued final guidance today and established a September 15, 2009 deadline for submitting applications. While the guidelines allow almost any kind of eligible applicants (state and local governments, transit and port authorities, etc), and the project eligibility list covers a broad range of project types and modes, it is also clear in the guidelines that USDOT is looking to award projects that can demonstrate long-term outcomes and relevance at the regional or national level.

Attachment A provides an overview of the TIGER program, including selection criteria and eligibility requirements.

Project Selection Principles

Caltrans has determined it will seek to sponsor a statewide priority list that would be backed by Governor Schwarzenegger. Attachment B outlines the timeline and the role MTC is expected to play in this process. It is unclear how large the state list will be, but the TIGER program has a \$300 million state limit.

MTC has developed the following principles to guide project selection:

1. Prioritize a list of projects valued at no more than \$125 million and focus on a list of specific realistic projects that we can achieve — not a wish list of projects that cannot hope to be funded given this very small program.
2. Include \$50 million for Doyle Drive. As the southern approach to the Golden Gate Bridge, this seismically deficient structure is the weak link in the entire U.S. 101 North Bay highway corridor. It has a \$1 billion funding plan nearing completion, and is a top priority for both the Governor and the Speaker of the House.
3. Seek to include a goods movement project of significance. While the Port of Oakland has been hurt financially in the economic downturn, leaving it with limited options to bring funding to bear for needed projects, federal guidelines are clearly focused on goods movement as a national priority. If possible, we will try to include a major goods movement project for the Bay Area.
4. Seek to include a transit project of regional significance. The recently completed Transportation 2035 Plan prioritizes transit as the future for Bay Area travel options.
5. Support projects seeking TIFIA commitments. At this point the most likely candidate is the BART-Oakland Airport Connector. A second project in the Bay Area that is seeking TIFIA funding is a proposal by the San Francisco Transbay Terminal project, but at this point, its TIFIA application is being considered outside the TIGER program.
6. If after the priorities in points 1-5 above are met, and additional funding capacity is available, consider a second highway or roadway project of regional significance that will compete well given the TIGER guidelines.
7. Prioritize projects that support Priority Development Areas and focused growth. PDAs serve areas within an existing community, near existing or planned fixed transit or served by comparable bus service, where more housing is planned.

Applying for Funds and Timeline

All interested and eligible applicants should submit project information using the format provided in Attachments C and D. Attachment C is a draft outline that Caltrans provided of the program guidance available in Attachment D, the final, federal TIGER guidance. The timeline for the development and approval of Bay Area TIGER Program priorities is as follows:

Application materials due to MTC	July 6, 2009
MTC evaluates applications received	July 6 – 14, 2009
Legislation Committee receives update on project submittals	July 10, 2009
Release of Recommended regional TIGER Program priorities	July 15, 2009
MTC adopts regional TIGER Program priorities	July 22, 2009

Eligible applicants are invited to submit applications to MTC for these funds. MTC will screen and evaluate all project applications according to the principles above and using the USDOT Selection Criteria in Attachment D. Please send completed applications to:

TIGER Discretionary Grant Program
Programming and Allocations Section
Attn: Kenneth Folan
Metropolitan Transportation Commission
101 Eighth Street
Oakland, CA 94607

If you have any questions regarding this program, please contact Kenneth Folan at (510) 817-5804, Alix Bockelman at (510) 817-5850 or Randy Rentschler at (510) 817-5850.

Sincerely,

Therese McMillan
Deputy Executive Director, Policy

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Attachments